

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 12, 2002

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 19: WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE ON TEACHERS' SALARIES

On Wednesday, March 27, 2002, an article appeared in the Washington Post regarding teacher salaries in the District of Columbia. Included with the article was a sidebar that compared FY 2002 teachers' salaries throughout the region. Alexandria City Public Schools administration offices were closed that week for spring break, and newspaper staff were unable to gather information from ACPS for comparative purposes.

The table below reflects the data provided in the Washington Post for Northern Virginia jurisdictions, includes comparable information for Alexandria teachers' salaries and provides expected salaries in the region in FY 2003.

Jurisdiction	Bottom Salary: Bachelor's degree, no experience in FY 2002	Bottom Salary: Bachelor's degree, no experience with proposed FY 2003 compensation increases	Top Salary: Experienced teachers with advanced degree in FY 2002	Top Salary: Experienced teachers with advanced degree, with proposed FY 2003 compensation increases
Alexandria	\$33,000	\$33,825	\$70,953	\$74,351
Arlington	\$34,297	\$35,154	\$79,156	\$81,135
Fairfax County	\$34,069	\$34,750	\$76,915	\$78,453
Loudoun	\$32,945	\$33,604	\$75,884	\$77,402
Prince William	\$33,115	\$34,274	\$66,038	\$68,349

After the proposed cost of living adjustment of 2.5 percent is incorporated, and if the additional step on the pay scale is funded for Schools employees, the top amount for experienced Alexandria teachers will increase to \$74,351.

Another way to look at teachers' pay is the pay per contract day. The contract length for teachers in each jurisdiction varies by as much as ten days. When this is taken into account, the salary per day for teachers throughout Northern Virginia before any proposed FY 2003 compensation adjustments are considered is as follows:

Jurisdiction	Contract length	Bottom salary in FY 2002 per day	Top salary in FY 2002 per day
Alexandria	190 days	\$174	\$373
Arlington	200 days	\$171	\$396
Fairfax County	193 days	\$177	\$399
Prince William	195 days	\$170	\$339

The Washington Post article has been attached for your information.

ATTACHMENT: Washington Post article, dated March 27, 2002, "District's Teachers Vote on 19% Raise"

STAFF: Kendel Taylor, Analyst, Office of Management and Budget
Superintendent Rebecca Perry, Alexandria City Public Schools



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District's Teachers Vote on 19% Raise

3-Year Salary Plan Approved by Board

By Justin Blum

Washington Post Staff Writer

Wednesday, March 27, 2002; Page B01

The District school board yesterday approved a contract with teachers that calls for pay increases totaling 19 percent over three years, a change that would make teacher salaries in the city more competitive with those in area suburbs.

But to pay for the salary raises that would take effect this year, school officials said they would have to cut about \$15 million from their capital budget. Those cuts could have a significant impact on rebuilding the school system's dilapidated buildings, school board members said.

The contract, unanimously approved by the school board and retroactive to last fall, now requires the endorsement of a majority of the more than 5,600 teachers, counselors, social workers and other employees covered by the pact. Mayor Anthony A. Williams (D) and the D.C. Council also would have to approve it. A mayoral spokesman said Williams supports the contract, and council member Kevin P. Chavous (D-Ward 7), chairman of the panel's education committee, said the council was likely to give its approval.

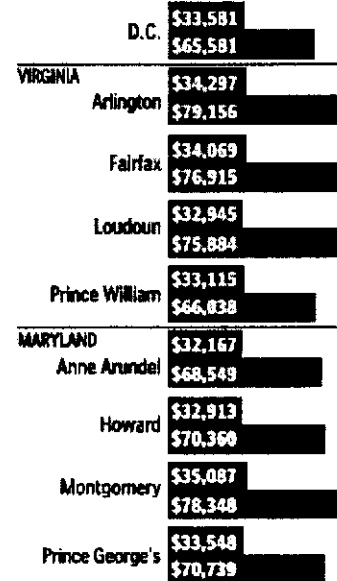
Teachers' Salaries

The District school board approved a 19 percent increase for teachers over three years, retroactive to last fall, in an effort to make District salaries more competitive with suburban schools.

■ Bottom salaries: Bachelor's degree, no experience

■ Top salaries: Experienced teachers with advanced degree

2002 salaries



NOTE: Figures for Alexandria unavailable.
SOURCE: County school systems

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Barbara Bullock, head of the Washington Teachers Union, said the contract has wide support from her union's members. The union ballots are to be counted tomorrow.

"I'm elated about it," Bullock said of the contract. But she added that the salary increase is "still not up with the surrounding jurisdictions. At least it gives us a start, and we'll go from there."

Under the contract, the District school system's starting salary of \$33,581 would be similar to starting salaries in many suburbs. However, at the highest pay levels, the District's \$65,581 this year would continue to lag behind school systems in Fairfax, Montgomery and Prince George's counties.

School board members said at a specially called meeting yesterday that teachers deserve the increases, and they praised school administrators for negotiating the contract. But board members said they were upset about the impact on the capital budget in the 68,000-student system.

"The price that we are paying for this contract is going to be at the expense of our students," said Laura D. Gardner, a mayoral appointee to the school board. "And I think that we constantly, constantly send a message to our students when we do this that everyone except them is worthy of some consideration. And I think that is a terrible message to be sending to our students."

Over the past year, school board members have repeatedly complained that they do not have enough money to properly educate students. However, the mayor and council members have chided them for failing to reduce costs and spend the money they have more wisely.

Louis J. Erste, the school system's chief operating officer, said money for raises would be freed up in the operating budget by shifting \$15 million in computer systems costs into the \$203 million capital budget. School officials then would have to reduce their capital spending by \$15 million, Erste said.

School officials said they thought the mayor's office had agreed to provide the \$15 million from other parts of the city budget. But yesterday, Erste said the school system and mayor's office had differing interpretations of that agreement.

The reduction in the capital budget -- along with the mayor's proposal to spend less on capital improvements next year than the school system had planned -- would throw off the system's school modernization program, said Sarah Woodhead, a school official overseeing the rebuilding. School officials had wanted to renovate or rebuild all of the city's schools over 15 years.

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The new contract also would allow the school system to stagger the times when schools begin and end classes. School officials said that step could yield significant savings in transportation costs for special education students, a costly operation for the system. Staggering schedules would allow bus drivers to complete one route and then return to pick up additional students in time for another school's later opening.

School officials said they are researching proposals about which schools should open earlier or later next school year. No decisions have been made, officials said.

The teachers union contract expired at the end of September. The school system administration has been negotiating the new contract since June.

Under the agreement, salaries would increase by 5 percent this year, retroactive to when the last contract expired. Next fiscal year, wages would increase by another 5 percent, followed by a 9 percent increase in fiscal 2004.

Several teachers said those numbers sounded good.

"We're very pleased with it," said Bonnie Curtis, a computer coordinator at Ballou Senior High School in Southeast. "We're looking forward to being comparable to surrounding jurisdictions."

Cassandra Batie, a special education teacher at Lincoln Middle School in Northwest, said she was disappointed that the contract did not give more flexibility in transferring between schools. She cast a ballot against the pact.

"The salary increase could be better," she said. "But we'll go along with anything we can get at this point."

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